

Rudby Parish Council: Chairman's Report to Annual Assembly – April 2026

I am pleased to offer my Chairman's report on Rudby Parish Council's 2025/26 year, which is the fourth year of the current council's five years in office. The term is one year longer than the standard four years because of the reorganisation of the North Yorkshire districts and county council into the North Yorkshire Council unitary authority which took full effect in April 2023.

Parish Council has remained at full strength throughout the year with no vacancies arising which needed to be filled. We have seven serving councillors who were originally elected in May 2022 and four who have been co-opted at various times to fill vacancies which arose. Many parish councils struggle to find and retain councillors, so the willingness of members of this community to offer their time and skills is greatly appreciated.

This council is fortunate to be served by a diligent and very capable Parish Clerk, Hilary Cope, who regularly "goes the extra mile" to ensure the smooth running of the council and to deal promptly with issues which arise. A particularly notable achievement by Hilary in the last year has been a complete overhaul of the burial ground procedures, documentation and work processes which brings them fully up to date with changes in legislation and best practices. A clerk is at the heart of everything a council does. It is a varied and challenging role. On behalf of the whole council, I would like to thank Hilary for her excellent and valued service.

Once again, a full programme of activities was carried out. This includes the Village Event and the Fireworks display. The fireworks continues to be very popular with generous donations from the community collected at the gate once again covering all the costs of the event. The council appreciates and thanks the cricket club for the use of their site to host the event, and the cricket club bar staff for their help in hosting and running the event. Our fireworks display is attracting increasing numbers of visitors from further afield, possibly because fewer and fewer councils are running their own. The Parish Council is contemplating introducing a ticketing system to ensure that future attendance numbers can be kept within safety limits.

The council is grateful to the many volunteers who have worked with the council on a variety of activities and projects including organising the village event, providing help and equipment needed to put up the Christmas tree and lights, participation in the litter pick, and for work on footpaths and environmental projects.

This year the Parish Council made significant progress on several projects. Works to repair and stabilise the wall of the old Linen Mill were completed, new benches were installed and landscaping work was carried out at the burial ground extension. A new commemorative bench was installed near the war memorial, and the Church House steps were refurbished. A significant contribution to the funding of these projects came from Community Infrastructure Levy payments which the Parish has received over the last few years. The rest of the funding came from the Parish Council's own reserves which had been set aside for these purposes.

Unfortunately, there is still no sign of substantive progress on the approved development for 25 homes on the north side of Garbutt Lane or on the site for 50 homes at Paddocks End adjacent to the SPAR. The planning decision on Paddocks End is subject to various planning conditions being incorporated into a Section 106 agreement. Permission will not take effect until the S106 agreement is completed. If the agreement is signed and planning takes effect, Rudby Parish Council will in due course become entitled to receive an associated Community Infrastructure Levy payment.

One disappointment is that due to capacity constraints the Parish Council has not made any progress on the Neighbourhood Plan in the past year. However, it remains our intention to complete and submit a Neighbourhood Plan before the new North Yorkshire Plan comes into effect.

The council's finances remain in good order with audits fully up to date and no significant audit issues raised. The budgeting and financial monitoring processes put in place over the last couple of years gives the council a clear view of its current situation and future financial needs. Expenditure on projects was planned and drew on reserves and other sources of funding set aside for these purposes. Underlying, recurring income and expenditure is broadly stable other than from the impact of inflation. It was not considered sustainable to absorb inflation, so the Parish Council took the view that an increase around the level of inflation to the precept for 2026/27 was necessary.

The routine work of the Parish Council includes dealing with issues raised through correspondence and at meetings, and the care and maintenance of public land in the village. Residents are encouraged to write to the council via the clerk or come and share their views at a meeting if there is something they think the Parish Council could or should be doing. Parish Council meetings are open to the public, and there is always an agenda item where residents can raise issues they want to bring to the council's attention. In the last year hundreds of items of correspondence were considered and the council commented on dozens of planning applications.

In a little over a year from now, elections will be held to elect councillors for the next four year term to both Rudby Parish Council and to North Yorkshire Council. These 2027 North Yorkshire Council elections will be fought on new boundaries which have been decided by the Local Government Boundary Commission following an extensive consultation process. Rudby Parish Council made its own submissions to this process arguing that our parish should be kept entirely within a single NYC division. Other submissions to the process proposed splitting our parish, but the boundary commission was persuaded by the merits of our proposed arrangements.

In an entirely separate Community Governance Review process run by North Yorkshire, there was a proposal which put forward an option of merging Potto Parish Council with our Parish Council. This option was resisted by Rudby Parish Council as it was not believed to be in the interest of our residents. Fortunately, our view prevailed.

I want to close by thanking all my fellow Councillors for being available, responsive, and willing to lead or participate in a range of recurring and one-off project activities in support of the parish over the year. The Parish Council could not operate effectively without their commitment of time, energy, and enthusiasm for trying to make the Parish a better place for us all.

Kind Regards and a safe and prosperous 2026/27 to all residents of our Parish.

Allan Mortimer
Chairman
Rudby Parish Council

13 April 2026